



DECISION MEMO
Laurel Inholding Access
USDA Forest Service, Northern Region
Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests
Red River Ranger District
Idaho County, Idaho



I. Decision

I have decided to authorize the applicant's request for a 20 year special use authorization for the construction and use of a road across National Forest System lands (hereinafter referred to as "NFS") in order to facilitate access to its property.

The legal coordinates for this permit are as follows: T28N, R9E, PB40 (Boise Meridian).

Background

Laurel Property is a private property inholding of approximately 38 acres owned by the Idaho Forest Group. It abuts existing NFS Road 9822 ("French Gulch").

The Idaho Forest Group has requested a long term special use authorization to construct 25 to 100 feet of new road across National Forest Service lands to access the Laurel inholding.

While the subject land parcel abuts NFS Road 9822, access is being requested from the Forest Service so that the approach road may be positioned to minimize damage to the existing cutslope of NFS Road 9822, and to ensure that the approach road is outside the stream influence area of a nearby dry (possibly ephemeral) draw.

Implementation and Design Specifications

Approximately 50 to 75 feet of roadway across NFS lands will be constructed to access the inholding. The constructed roadway will be 14 feet wide, single lane, with a gravel surface.

The approach onto NFS Road 9822 will require the installation of a metal culvert in the existing ditch line to prevent impediment to the ditch function. Any NFS timber that will be removed road construction will be decked for subsequent removal by the Forest Service. Remaining slash will be windrowed at base of any fill slope or disposed on the private inholding.

Project Implementation: Because proponents will like to use the property as soon as practical after receiving proper permit issuance, it is anticipated that this construction will take place in September 2014.

Rationale for Decision and Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Decision

A. Category of Exclusion and Rationale for Using the Category

Based on information in this document and the project record, I have determined this project is not significant in either context or intensity (40 CFR 1508.27), that no extraordinary circumstances affecting resource conditions exist (36 CFR 220.6), that this project may be categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS, and that it meets all the criteria outlined for 36 CFR 220.6(e)(3): *Approval of minor special uses*.

The rationale for my decision is based on: 1) the proposed action fully meeting the criteria for Categorical Exclusions; 2) the proposed action meeting the purpose and need; 3) the findings related to extraordinary circumstances, discussed below; 4) the project's consistency with laws and regulations, including the Forest Plan; 5) the on-the-ground review and discussion with resource specialists; and, 6) my review of the Biological Assessments (BA), Biological Evaluations (BE), and specialists' reports.

B. Finding of the Absence of Adverse Effects to Extraordinary Circumstances

1. Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat or Forest Service sensitive species:

The Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team) Botanist, Wildlife and Fisheries Biologists determined the proposed actions will have no direct or indirect effect or impact on listed or sensitive plant, wildlife or fish species or habitat, and suitable habitat will not be altered because habitat is not present in the project area, habitat is present but the species do not occur in the project area or habitat is present and the species may occur, but the project will not affect the habitat for the species; therefore, no incremental effects exist that will cause a cumulative effect, as documented in the Biological Assessments and Evaluations, and specialists' reports (see plant, wildlife, and fish sections of the project record).

2. Floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds:

Floodplains: *The Project will not modify or occupy floodplains to an extent greater than already exists. As such, there will be no adverse impacts to floodplains; thereby complying with EO 11988 and FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30.3.2.*

Wetlands: *The Project does not propose to modify or destroy wetlands. As such, the Project will not adversely affect wetlands; thereby complying with EO 11990 and FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30.3.2.*

Municipal Watersheds: *The Project area is not located within a municipal watershed. As such, the Project will not adversely affect municipal watersheds; thereby complying with FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30.3.2.*

While the land parcel abuts the existing road 9822 access is being requested from the Forest Service so that the approach road may be positioned to minimize damage to the existing cutslope of Road 9822 and to ensure that the approach road is outside the stream influence area of a nearby dry (possibly ephemeral) draw.

3. Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas or national recreation areas:

The project area is not located within any Congressionally designated areas.

4. Inventoried Roadless areas or potential wilderness areas:

The project is not located within any Nez Perce Forest Plan Roadless Areas, Idaho Roadless Areas (36 CFR 294 (c)) or potential wilderness areas; therefore, no direct or indirect effects or incremental effects that will cause a cumulatively significant effect to these areas are anticipated.

5. Research Natural Areas:

The project area does not include land designated as a Research Natural Area; therefore, no direct or indirect effects or incremental effects that will cause a cumulatively significant effect to these areas are anticipated.

6. American Indians and Alaska native religious or cultural sites and

7. Archaeological sites, or historical properties or areas: An appropriate inventory has been conducted for the above project and no cultural properties are located within the area of potential effects; therefore, the Forest Cultural Resource Specialist has made a *No Historic Properties Affected* determination and the project may proceed.

8. Soils: *The project is located on soil map unit 22A31 - Andic Dystrochrepts, low relief rolling uplands. This map unit has low to moderate hazard ratings for surface erosion, subsurface erosion, and mass wasting. Road construction should meet Forest Service specifications. There were no field visits to the project location for this assessment. The assessment is based on the soil mapping and hazards from the Nez Perce National Forest Soil Survey.*

II. Interested and Affected Agencies, Organizations, and Persons Contacted

On May 1, 2014, letters providing information and seeking public comment were mailed to individuals, organizations, a variety of state and local agencies, and the Nez Perce and Coeur d'Alene tribal councils. These letters and responses thereto are contained in the project record.

III. Findings Required by Other Laws

Based on my review of the actions associated with this project, I find that the Laurel Inholding Access special use permit request is consistent with applicable Federal laws and regulations.

National Forest Management Act and Nez Perce National Forest Plan: This action is consistent with the 1987 Nez Perce National Forest Plan (USDA Forest Service 1987), as amended, as required by the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (see project record for further information) because it follows the standards and guidelines contained in those plans. In addition, the decision considers the best available science (36 CFR 219.35(a); Reinstatement of the 2000 Planning Rule; 74 FR 242).

Forest Plan Amendment 20 - PACFISH Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs): All activities associated with the proposed action comply with direction

regarding PACFISH because no effects to wildlife or fish species or habitat are anticipated, and no soil disturbance will occur.

Endangered Species Act: A Forest Service Fish Biologist, Wildlife Biologist, and Botanist evaluated the proposed action with regard to the Endangered Species Act as documented in the Biological Assessments, Biological Evaluations, and specialists' reports, and determined the subject Modification project is consistent with the Endangered Species Act because no effects to threatened and endangered species are anticipated.

Clean Air Act: This project will comply with the provisions of the Clean Air Act, and the rules, regulations, and permit procedures of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) because no effects to air quality are anticipated and no prescribed burning is planned.

Clean Water Act and State Water Quality Laws: The Interdisciplinary Team Hydrologist has determined that this project complies with the Clean Water Act, and state and Federal water quality laws because this proposal will have no significant effects to the water quality of area or downstream waters.

National Historic Preservation Act: Because of the type of project and its location, the Forest Cultural Resource Specialist has determined that this project has no potential to cause effects on historic properties as there are none present; therefore, the Forest Service has no further legal obligation concerning National Historic Preservation Act compliance. (A copy of this analysis is located in the project record.) This project meets the Agency's responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act (16 USC 470), as amended, and is consistent with the *Programmatic Agreement between the Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Region 1 National Forests in Northern Idaho Regarding the Management of Cultural Resources*.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act: No substantial losses of migratory bird habitat are expected from the implementation of this proposal, nor any measurable impact on Neotropical migratory bird populations as a whole; therefore, the proposed action will comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The project complies with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director's Order #131 related to the applicability of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to Federal agencies and requirements for permits for "take." In addition, this project complies with Executive Order 13186 because the analysis meets agency obligations as defined under the January 16, 2001 Memorandum of Understanding between the Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designed to complement Executive Order 13186.

American Indian Treaty Rights: The Nez Perce Tribal Government Liaison and the Nez Perce Tribe reviewed the subject special use permit modification, and determined the proposed action will not affect Nez Perce Tribe Treaty rights or Nez Perce Tribal members' abilities to exercise those rights.

Environmental Justice: The proposed action will not disproportionately impact consumers, Native American Indians, women, low-income populations, other minorities, or civil rights of any American Citizen in accordance with Executive Order 12898. No

disproportionate impacts to minority or low-income populations were identified during scoping or the effects analysis.

Prime Farm Land, Range Land, and Forest Land: The proposed action complies with the Federal Regulations for prime land. The definition of "prime" forest land does not apply to lands within the National Forest System. The project area does not contain any prime range land or farm land. Federal lands will be managed with appropriate sensitivity to the effects on adjacent lands.

Energy Requirements: No unusual energy demands are required to implement the proposed action.

Other Laws or Requirements: The proposed action is consistent with all other Federal, state or local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment and cultural resources.

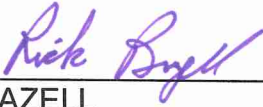
IV. Administrative Review and Appeal Opportunities, and Implementation Date

Pursuant to 36 CFR 214.4(c), this decision is subject to appeal by the holder, operator or applicant directly affected by the decision.

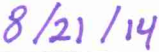
V. Contact Person

Questions regarding this decision should be sent to Linda S. Helm, c/o Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forest Supervisor's Office, 903 Third Street, Kamiah, Idaho 83536; by telephone to (208) 935-4285; or facsimile transmittal to (208) 983-4275 during business hours (M-F, excluding Federal Holidays, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. PST).

VI. Signature of Deciding Officer



RICK BRAZELL
Forest Supervisor
Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forest



Date

Enclosures: Maps of Site

cc: Molly Puchlerz

Maps of Laurel Inholding Access Site

Laurel Inholding Access (New Request)

